

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 195002

E.O. 11652

TAGS: CI, PFOR

SUBJECT: NEWSWEEK ARTICLE, OCTOBER 8 ISSUE, ENTITLED
SLAUGHTERHOUSE IN SANTIAGO

FOLLOWING IS COMPLETE TEXT OF NEWSWEEK OCT 8 ARTICLE
ENTITLED "SLAUGHTERHOUSE IN SANTIAGO." NEWSWEEK'S PRESS
RELEASE SEPTEMBER 30 ABOUT THIS STORY PICKED UP BY AP AND
APPEARED TODAY IN BALTIMORE SUN AND ON MORNING NEWS BROAD-
CASTS.

QUOTE TEXT - PABLO NERUDA, CHILE'S NOBEL PRIZEWINNING POET,
WAS DEAD OF CANCER, AND EVEN AS HIS BODY WAS LOWERED INTO
ITS GRAVE, HIS COUNTRYMEN SET ABOUT TRYING TO MURDER HIS
WORDS. BOOKS OF ALL KINDS, NOT ONLY NERUDA'S BUT THOSE BY
MAO AND MARX AND MARCUSE, WERE SEIZED BY THE TENS OF THOU-
SANDS FROM HOMES, BOOKSTORES AND LIBRARIES AND THEN FED
TO THE BONFIRES IN THE STREETS OF SANTIAGO. AND THE
MILITARY JUNTA THAT HAS RULED CHILE FOR THREE WEEKS DIDN'T
STOP THERE. CHILEAN UNIVERSITIES, ONCE PROUD BASTIONS OF
INDEPENDENCE, WERE PURGED OF SUSPECTED LEFTISTS, AND ORDIN-
ARY PEOPLE LEARNED TO DREAD THE MIDNIGHT KNOCK ON THE DOOR.
ALL THAT WAS BAD ENOUGH, BUT NEWSWEEK CORRESPONDENT JOHN
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BARNES DISCOVERED LAST WEEK THAT THE REIGN OF TERROR HAS
ALREADY GONE MUCH FURTHER THAN MOST PEOPLE THOUGHT. BELOW,
BARNES'S REPORT:

THE MILITARY JUNTA WILL NOT ADMIT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN MASS EXECUTIONS SINCE THE OVERTHROW OF SALVADOR ALLENDE'S MARXIST GOVERNMENT. "WE HAVE EXECUTED PERHAPS EIGHT PEOPLE SINCE THEN FOR SHOOTING AT TROOPS," COL. PEDRO EWING TOLD NEWSMEN. BUT THAT SIMPLY IS NOT TRUE. LAST WEEK, I SLIPPED THROUGH A SIDE DOOR INTO THE SANTIAGO CITY MORGUE, FLASHING MY JUNTA PRESS PASS WITH ALL THE IMPATIENT AUTHORITY OF A HIGH OFFICIAL. ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY DEAD BODIES WERE LAID OUT ON THE GROUND FLOOR, AWAITING IDENTIFICATION BY FAMILY MEMBERS. UPSTAIRS, I PASSED THROUGH A SWING DOOR AND THERE IN A DIMLY LIT CORRIDOR LAY AT LEAST 50 MORE BODIES, SQUEEZED ONE AGAINST ANOTHER, THEIR HEADS PROPPED UP AGAINST THE WALL. THEY WERE ALL NAKED.

MOST HAD BEEN SHOT AT CLOSE RANGE UNDER THE CHIN. SOME HAD BEEN MACHINE-GUNNED IN THE BODY. THEIR CHESTS HAD BEEN SLIT OPEN AND SEWN TOGETHER GROTESQUELY IN WHAT PRESUMABLY HAD BEEN A PRO FORMA AUTOPSY. THEY WERE ALL YOUNG AND, JUDGING FROM THE ROUGHNESS OF THEIR HANDS, ALL FROM THE WORKING CLASS. A COUPLE OF THEM WERE GIRLS, DISTINGUISHABLE AMONG THE MASSED BODIES ONLY BY THE CURVES OF THEIR BREASTS. MOST OF THEIR HEADS HAD BEEN CRUSHED. I REMAINED FOR PERHAPS TWO MINUTES AT MOST, THEN LEFT THE BUILDING.

THE NEXT DAY I RETURNED TO THE MORGUE WITH A CHILEAN FRIEND SO THAT I WOULD HAVE A WITNESS. I ALSO TOOK ALONG A CAMERA. AS I WALKED THROUGH THE SWING DOORS OF THE CORRIDOR, THE SICKLY SWEET SMELL OF THE DECOMPOSING BODIES ALMOST KNOCKED ME BACK. THERE WERE MORE BODIES, PERHAPS 70, AND THEY WERE DIFFERENT FROM THE DAY BEFORE. JUST AS I WAS PULLING THE CAMERA FROM MY JACKET, A MAN IN A WHITE COAT WALKED THROUGH THE DOORS AT THE OTHER END OF THE CORRIDOR. "WHAT DO YOU WANT?" HE ASKED. "I'M LOOKING FOR THE BATHROOM," I SAID. "COME WITH ME," HE SAID. AS I FOLLOWED HIM, I TOOK A SHARP RIGHT AND RAN OUT OF THE BUILDING. HE SHOUTED AFTER ME BUT DID NOT TRY TO FOLLOW. I DID NOT HAVE THE COURAGE TO TRY AGAIN. LATER, IN MY HOTEL ROOM, MY FRIEND BURST INTO UNCLASSIFIED

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TEARS. "THESE WERE MY COUNTRYMEN," HE CRIED. "MY GOD, WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO US?"

BODIES: WORKERS AT THE MORGUE HAVE BEEN WARN-D THAT THEY WILL BE COURT-MARTIALED AND SHOT IF THEY REVEAL WHAT IS GOING ON THERE. BUT I WAS ABLE TO OBTAIN AN OFFICIAL MORGUE BODY-COUNT FROM THE DAUGHTER OF A MEMBER OF ITS STAFF: BY THE FOURTEENTH DAY FOLLOWING THE COUP, SHE SAID, THE MORGUE HAD RECEIVED AND PROCESSED 2,796 CORPSES.

NO ONE KNOWS HOW MANY HAVE BEEN DISPOSED OF ELSEWHERE; A GRAVEDIGGER TOLD ME OF REPORTS THAT HELICOPTERS HAVE BEEN GATHERING BODIES AT THE EMERGENCY FIRST-AID CENTER IN

CENTRAL SANTIAGO, THEN CARRYING THEM OUT TO SEA TO BE DUMPED. ONE PRIEST INFORMED ME THAT ON THE SATURDAY AFTER THE COUP HE HAD MANAGED TO GET INTO THE CITY'S TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, WHICH HAD BEEN THE SCENE OF HEAVY FIGHTING, ON THE PRETEXT OF BLESSING THE DEAD. HE TOLD ME HE SAW 200 BODIES, ALL PILED TOGETHER. TALES LIKE THAT ABOUND IN SANTIAGO, AND THOUGH INFORMATION IS ALMOST NONEXISTENT FOR THE REST OF CHILE, THE PRESUMPTION IS THAT THE EXECUTIONS HAVE FOLLOWED A SIMILAR PATTERN IN OTHER CITIES. BUT THE MORGUE COUNT ALONE SETS THE REGIME'S KILL RATE AT AN APPALLING 200 CHILEANS A DAY -- JUST FOR THE CAPITAL.

WITH HARDLY AN EXCEPTION, THE VICTIMS COME FROM THE POBLACIONES -- THE SLUMS THAT ENCIRCLE SANTIAGO AND HOUSE HALF THE CITY'S 4 MILLION INHABITANTS. DURING THE THREE TURBULENT YEARS OF SALVADOR ALLENDE'S ADMINISTRATION, THE POOR OF THE POBLACIONES NEVER WAVERED IN THEIR SUPPORT OF HIS GOVERNMENT, FOR THE FACT WAS THAT THE ROTOS (BROKEN-DOWN ONES, AS THEY ARE CONTEMPTUOUSLY CALLED BY THE MORE AFFLUENT) HAD NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD. DESPITE THE SOARING INFLATION, THEY EARNED ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY UNDREAMED-OF LUXURIES LIKE NEW CLOTHES, RADIOS, TELEVISION SETS, REFRIGERATORS. COMMUNITY FOOD-DISTRIBUTION CENTERS IN THE POBLACIONES WERE ALWAYS WELL STOCKED, WHILE THE SHELVES OF STORES ELSEWHERE REMAINED BARREN. PRESUMABLY, THE JUNTA BELIEVES THAT SINCE THE POBLACIONES PROVIDED THE FORMER GOVERNMENT'S MAIN SUPPORT, THEY MUST BE TERRORIZED INTO ACCEPTING THE FACT OF ITS DEMISE. SO THE LOCAL LEADERS ARE NOW PAYING WITH THEIR UNCLASSIFIED

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LIVES FOR THEIR LOVE OF ALLENDE. NOT ONE POBLACION HAS ESCAPED THE TERROR.

ROUNDUP: I SPOKE WITH THREE WOMEN FROM THE PINCOYA POBLACION. ONE OF THEM, A MOTHER OF TWO, HAD JUST FOUND OUT THAT SHE WAS A WIDOW. SHE TOLD ME THIS TEARFUL STORY: "SOLDIERS RAIDED OUR POBLACION LAST SATURDAY AT 8 IN THE MORNING. IN THE SECTION WHERE WE LIVE, THEY ROUNDED UP ABOUT 50 MEN AND HELD THEM UNTIL A POLICE LIEUTENANT CAME TO TAKE HIS PICK. WHEN THE LIEUTENANT SAW MY HUSBAND, HE MADE HIM STEP FORWARD AND TOLD HIM: 'NOW YOU WILL PAY FOR ALL YOU PEOPLE HAVE DONE.' THE CARABINEROS TOOK HIM AND A FEW OTHERS TO THE POLICE STATION, AND THE REST WERE ARRESTED BY SOLDIERS." FOR THREE DAYS, SHE AND THE OTHER WOMEN OF PINCOYA SEARCHED FOR THEIR MEN IN POLICE STATIONS AND THE TWO SOCCER STADIUMS WHERE THOUSANDS ARE INCARCERATED. IT WAS ONLY AFTER THEY HEARD THAT A 17-YEAR-OLD BOY FROM THEIR BLOCK HAD BEEN FOUND AT THE MORGUE -- SHOT IN THE HEAD AND CHEST -- THAT THEY MADE THE JOURNEY TO SEE THE LISTS OF THE DEAD. THERE THEY FOUND HER HUSBAND, GABRIEL, AS WELL AS EVERY ADULT MALE FROM ONE BLOCK OF THEIR POBLACION.

I JOINED A FUNERAL PROCESSION OF WEEPING FAMILIES FOLLOWING THREE COFFINS TO BURIAL. CARABINEROS, I WAS TOLD, HAD RAIDED A HOME IN THE PARQUE SANTA MARIA POBLACION AND HAD PICKED UP THREE PETTY THIEVES AGED 18, 19 AND 20. A SERGEANT TOLD THEM THEY WOULD BE RELEASED IF THEY PAID 7,000 ESCUDOR -- ONLY 5 DOLS., BUT A LOT OF MONEY TO THE POBLACION POOR. THEIR BARRIO RAISED THE MONEY AND THE YOUTHS RETURNED HOME. BUT TWO HOURS LATER, A CARABINERO PATROL CAME BACK TO GET THEM. THAT WAS THE LAST THEIR FAMILIES HEARD, UNTIL THEY FOUND THEIR NAMES ON THE MORGUE LIST. ONE OF THE BOYS WAS SO RIDDLED WITH BULLETS THAT THEY COULD HARDLY DRESS HIM FOR BURIAL. BUT THE FATE OF THE OTHER TWO WAS WORSE. COFFINS IN CHILE HAVE SMALL WINDOW DOORS OVER THE FACT OF THE DEAD, AND THE WOMEN OPENED THEM FOR ME. THERE WERE NO HEADS INSIDE.

ORLANDO CONTRERAS, WHO LIVES WITH HIS WIFE AND SEVEN CHILDREN IN THE JOSE MARIA CARO POBLACION, IS IN DAILY DREAD
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OF AN OFFICIAL KNOCK AT HIS DOOR. HE IS A LABORER WHO WORKED IN SANTIAGO'S OFFICE OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, A PARTICULAR TARGET OF THE NEW REGIME. AND HE IS WELL AWARE OF THE DANGER HE FACES, SHOULD THE SOLDIERS COME AFTER HIM. ON THE DAY THE COUP TOOK PLACE, HE TOLD ME, HE AND ONE OF HIS SONS SAW TEN HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS MARCHED FROM THEIR SCHOOL, THEIR HANDS OVER THEIR HEADS, AFTER A BRIEF SKIRMISH WITH CARABINEROS. THEY WERE FORCED TO LIE FACE DOWN ON THE GROUND, AND THEN A POLICEMAN WALKED THE LINE OF PRONE YOUNGSTERS, SPRAYING THEM WITH MACHINE-GUN FIRE.

THE STORIES OF ATROCITIES ARE ENDLESS, AND BY NOW, INHABITANTS OF THE POBLACIONES ARE UTTERLY TERRIFIED. "I AM TOO AFRAID TO LOOK FOR HIM," SAYS A WOMAN FROM THE ULTIMA HORA POBLACION, WHOSE HUSBAND WAS LAST SEEN COVERED WITH BLOOD BEING HAULED AWAY IN A POLICY TRUCK. "I AM AFRIAD THAT THEY WILL TAKE ME, TOO, AND WHAT WOULD HAPPEN THEN TO MY FOUR CHILDREN?" MANY ARE NOW AFRAID EVEN TO ASSOCIATE WITH FAMILIES THAT HAD ANY CONNECTION WITH ALLENDE'S REGIME -- WHETHER AS PARTY MEMBERS, UNION LEADERS OR EMPLOYEES IN THE FOOD-DISTRIBUTION CENTERS. "THEY CAN KILL WHOMEVER THEY WANT TO KILL," SAYS CONTRERAS BITTERLY. "THERE IS NOTHING, ABSOLUTELY NOTHING, THAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT."

BECAUSE OF THE TOTAL CENSORSHIP OF DOMESTIC REPORTING, MOST MIDDLE AND UPPER CLASS CHILEANS HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IS HAPPENING. THEY HEAR RUMORS, BUT THEIR HATRED FOR ALLENDE COMPOUNDED BY THEIR HISTORIC CONTEMPT FOR THE ROTOS LEAVES THEM LITTLE DESIRE TO VERIFY THEM. MANY DO NOT BELIEVE THE STORIES ABOUT SLAUGHTER IN THE POBLACIONES; MANY SIMPLY DON'T MUCH CARE. "WHY SHOULD WE?" A CHILEAN LAWYER ASKED ME OVER AN EXPENSIVE LUNCH IN A WEALTHY SECTION OF

SANTIAGO. "I DON'T BELIEVE THE STORIES YOU TELL ME, BUT
AFTER THE THINGS THE SUPPORTERS OF SALVADOR ALLENDE HAVE
DONE TO CHILE, THEY DESERVE WHATEVER HAPPENS TO THEM."
END QUOTE KISSINGER

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